

Arkansas and ESSA

In December 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law. ESSA gives each state an opportunity to take a renewed look at the work they have done to develop teacher and leader support, development, and evaluation systems. This law ends the federal requirement that states implement teacher and leader evaluation systems that include student growth measures as a significant criteria in an educators' overall rating, while maintaining states' obligations to ensure all students have equitable access to effective teachers.

ESSA allows states to invest in systems that go beyond ratings to provide teachers with useful feedback and professional development to improve. In addition, states must describe how low-income and minority children enrolled in Title I schools are not served at disproportionate rates by **ineffective, out-of-field, and inexperienced teachers, principals or other school leaders** and the measures the state will use to evaluate and publicly report on this requirement.

We believe that every student deserves to be surrounded by a team of excellent educators, and we now have the opportunity to review TESS, LEADS, and Mentoring to ensure these systems are supporting students and teachers across the state. We are focused on ensuring teachers receive the feedback and support they need to experience an increase in student learning.

Moving forward, Arkansas will continue to:

1. Integrate teacher and leader support and evaluation into broader efforts to develop teaching practice and improve student learning.
2. Drive continuous improvement of teaching practice and leadership development.
3. Ensure the system is fair, credible, and transparent.

Educator Preparation

As the state completes its second year of TESS and LEADS implementation, the training and support needed for educator preparation programs has evolved. Individual institutions of higher education (IHEs) and non-traditional preparation programs re-shaped their efforts to train and qualify educators for effectiveness by incorporating the current TESS and LEADS rubrics and processes into programs of study. This year, IHEs and non-traditional preparation providers will submit a Letter of Assurance to the ADE to document TESS-and-LEADS-ready educators. A matrix will be posted by June 1, 2016, on the ADE Educator Preparation web page detailing the type of TESS and LEADS training each program provided so that districts can determine the training needed for new hires. Some IHEs are incorporating the use of the online systems approved by the ADE to help ensure educators are prepared to be successful when they enter Arkansas public schools. Contact Joan Luneau (joan.luneau@arkansas.gov or 1-501-683-6618) for assistance with educator preparation.

Arkansas BloomBoard

Arkansas educators use BloomBoard, an online platform, designed for efficient and effective data collection and management. BloomBoard allows observers to provide feedback on performance, prescribe personalized resources for support, and to validate effective practice. Using BloomBoard, educators (learners) advocate for their professional growth needs and are able to collect and reflect evidence of successful practice.

The Arkansas BloomBoard Support network includes Lead Contacts (Organizational Administrators) in every public school district and charter school. This person has the ability to maintain current accounts for collaborative work in BloomBoard. Each school building in Arkansas also has a BloomBoard Super User who provides technical assistance for classroom and specialty educators when needed. It is important for districts to keep Lead Contact/Org Admin and Super User identifications current.

The Office of Educator Effectiveness facilitates the training for those who use BloomBoard in Arkansas.

BloomBoard Customer Service (support@bloomboard.com or 1-888-418-1595) has a proven record of success with those who need immediate system assistance, whether at school or away. During the 2016-2017 school year, Arkansas Educational Co-Ops will have additional assistance for educators by having trained BloomBoard Support Contacts for the first time. Arkansas will also assign new Support Coaches to six different regions to serve Co-Ops and districts with ongoing implementation needs.

Contact Becky Gibson (becky.gibson@arkansas.gov or 1-501-683-3160) in the Office of Educator Effectiveness for assistance with Arkansas BloomBoard.

2016-2017 Mentoring and Teacher/Leader Support

During the 2016-2017 school year, the online platform of the Beginning Administrator (BA) and Novice Teacher (NT) Mentoring Systems will be BloomBoard. BAs and NTs can earn micro-credentials as part of their mentoring process to document attainment of skills related to their professional growth goals. Mentors will recommend competency-based resources from the BloomBoard Collections (formerly known as the BloomBoard Marketplace) to BAs and NTs as they work to achieve Professional Growth Plan (PGP) goals and associated micro-credentials. The Survive and Thrive Resource Modules will also be in BloomBoard to be used throughout the school year as needed.

Because we also know that support continues beyond the completion of the first year of employment, as educators develop professional growth plans or note areas for continued growth and development, all educators can access resources through BloomBoard Collections and through AR IDEAS, both of which are aligned with the components of TESS and LEADS.

Observer Credentialing

For BAs, a new tool, **Observation Engine**, will be in BloomBoard as the training and proficiency credentialing system to replace Teachscape's *Focus for Observers* accounts previously used to credential teacher observers. Prospective administrators do not need to purchase an individual Teachscape *Focus for Observers* account to be credentialed. The Observation Engine through BloomBoard is a tool which Arkansas will use as a collaborative growth process for the observer, culminating in a demonstrated level of proficiency in rating educator performance through a series of video observations supported by mentor and BA work during the first semester. A proficient level of competency must be reached to earn a micro-credential as a final rater of teacher observations to meet the state's credentialing requirement. All administrators who conduct summative evaluations of teachers must be credentialed.

An exception to the credentialing process described above are **Experienced Administrators from out-of-state and Returning Administrators who have been out of the field since 2013**. Those meeting these criteria must obtain a Teachscape account and complete the training and certification through *Focus for Observers* in order to become credentialed **unless they (and their district) opt to participate in the state's mentoring program**, which would then allow credentialing through the Observation Engine tool. Accounts for Out-of-State experienced administrators and those returning to the field who were not previously credentialed may request an account using this link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ioSwLtfyvvdwhawn61nEBGeA_Cn9yGoUKbl1-1TYEdk/viewform?c=0&w=1Af

The Superintendent of the School District employing an out-of-state or returning administrator should make the request. Districts may be contacted to verify their status of those meeting the criteria for this type of account. Contact Renee Nelson (renee.nelson@arkansas.gov or 1-501-682-9850) in the Office of Educator Effectiveness for assistance with questions related to beginning administrators.

2016-2017 Required Trainings

Training for 2016-2017: Current Educators

For the 2016-2017 school year, there are no new requirements or changes to TESS or LEADS required processes. **No training or update is required for currently employed educators who have been using TESS and a system of support**; however, the ADE will provide new implementation support videos for districts who wish to view and share "best practice" implementation ideas with staff. Support videos will be available online by May 15, 2016.

2016-2017 Trainings for Novice Teachers: Unless NTs have previously received training from their IHEs, districts are responsible for these **required** trainings or may request co-ops to provide these trainings. Districts are encouraged to differentiate training needs for novices based on the NTs

preparation. A matrix detailing IHE training will be posted [here](#) by June 1, 2016.

- 1 TESS Law and Process
- 1 Training on the Danielson Framework for Teaching
- 1 BloomBoard functionality training

2016-2017 Trainings for Out-of-State Teachers and Teachers Returning to Workforce: Out-of-state teachers and teachers returning to the profession since 2013 **must** be trained on:

- 1 TESS Law and Process
- 1 Training on the Danielson Framework for Teaching
- 1 BloomBoard functionality training

The ADE is updating the TESS Law and Process training that has been provided in the past and will have the updated training materials and training facilitation guide posted online by May 15, 2016. This training must be delivered by the school district, Educational Co-op, or trained Institution of Higher Education staff. The ADE's *TESS Rubric Components Training* will be updated and posted online by May 15, 2016 for districts or co-ops who need to provide training on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. There is no minimum training requirement; however, it is important to ensure that educators are effectively trained on the system components by which they will be evaluated. District Super Users or co-op personnel may provide BloomBoard training to ensure users understand how to use the platform.

For details or questions related to teacher training, please contact Maureen Harness at Maureen.harness@arkansas.gov or at 501-683-4382.

Required Trainings 2016-2017 Novice Teacher Mentors

Novice Teacher Mentors will receive updated training to support and guide their NTs through their first year. During the first semester, NTs and mentors will work through improved "Survive and Thrive" resources, now housed as a BloomBoard Collection, and mentors will assist the NT with the development of the NTs PGP (final approval of the PGP is by the administrator). The mentor will assist the NT in identifying a BloomBoard resource collection that aligns to the PGP to use during the second semester. The collection will guide the NTs work toward meeting PGP goals and the NT will earn a micro-credential as evidence that he/she has attained skills to meet the goals.

Co-Ops will provide face-to-face training for new mentors and updates for experienced mentors. District Project Directors will also attend a mentoring update at their local Co-Ops. Each Co-op will determine the dates and times of the trainings and updates. Project Directors must attend training at their local Co-Op.

Required Trainings 2016-2017 for Beginning Administrators (BA) and BA Mentors

All new administrators must attend BA Induction Training and one AAEA Sponsored Conference as part of the BA mentoring requirements. All new BAs and new mentors must be trained on the Observation Engine and the use of BloomBoard Collections. Training for New BAs and New BA mentors will be held in conjunction with the AAEA summer conference. Experienced BA mentors will have training options during the AAEA summer conference or through scheduled trainings at local Co-ops. BAs on year 2 or 3 of an ALCP will also have training options through scheduled trainings at local Co-ops or webinars. Project Directors must attend training at their local Co-Op.

All new BAs must complete the following additional training as part of the mentoring requirements:

- 1 TESS/LEADS Law and Process for Administrators
 - o The required TESS/LEADS Law and Process for Administrators Training will be offered during the AAEA Summer Conference and at a few additional times during the summer and fall. Any BA hired after August 1 will need to attend the BA Induction Make-up Training on September 19, 2016 at the Holiday Inn Airport and also attend an AAEA Fall Conference to be announced.
- 1 BloomBoard for Administrators Training

- Training will be offered at the AAEA summer Conference and at additional times during the summer and fall for new administrators on how to use BloomBoard as an observer, how to schedule meetings, how to provide feedback, and several other administrator functions. New administrators will also learn how to use BloomBoard as a LEADS learner, create a PGP using LEADS functions, and understand how to transition between the observer and learner roles.

Training for 2016-17: Out-of-State Experienced Administrators and Administrators Returning to Workforce

The TESS/LEADS Law and Process for Administrators and BloomBoard trainings are both required for administrators who have no prior experience with TESS. All administrators who participate in the summative rating of teachers must complete the credentialing requirements to ensure proficiency in observer rating (as referenced in *Observer Credentialing* section of this update).

Moving Forward:

The ADE will continue to streamline teacher and leader systems during the 2016-17 school year to maximize opportunities for effective (and efficient) support.

The ADE appreciates the continued dedication of Arkansas educators and leaders, without whom this work would not be possible. We look forward to the continued growth for all involved with the possibilities of supporting and benefiting all Arkansas students.

Thank you for working with the Arkansas Department of Education.

Required Trainings

2016-2017 See

[Training Calendar](#)

Here

Educator Role	Induction	Mentor Training	BloomBoard Training **	Observation Engine Credentialing	TESS/LEADS Law & Process (Face-to-Face)	NT & BA Mentoring Systems Updates
BA New to Profession	X		X	X	X	
BA on ALCP- Year 2 or Year 3						X
Experienced Out-of-State Administrator			X	* (See TESS-LEADS-Mentoring Update for details)	X	
Experienced Administrator Out-of-Profession Since 2013			X	* (See TESS-LEADS-Mentoring Update for details)	X	

New BA Mentor		X		X		
BA Experienced Mentor Since 2013				X		X
New NT Mentors and NT Mentors trained prior to 2014-15		X				
NT Mentors trained 14/15 and 15/16						X
Novice Teachers			X (IHE, District, or Co- Op)		X (IHE, District, or Co-Op, plus Framework for Teaching Training)	
Project Director						X

**Experienced administrators may attend the BloomBoard Training for additional support.